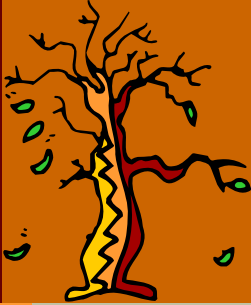


Fall 2005



6th District Update

Fearey's First Edition

This last month has been a challenging one for our nation. In the last few days, the challenge hit close to home. My cousin called to tell me her daughter and family (including in-laws, an eleven-day old baby, two dogs and three cats) had left Lake Charles, Louisiana, and had settled in safe and sound at a cabin. They also felt certain that their house was OK and that they could return in a matter of days. After enduring record-setting heat, finding out that their house had, in fact, suffered considerable damage and that they wouldn't be allowed to return home for several days, they headed to Wichita (without the husbands since their electrical skills are needed at home).

Upon arrival in Wichita they checked in with the Red Cross only to learn that their area of Louisiana had not yet been declared a disaster. They also learned that it may be a month or more before they are allowed to return to Lake Charles. The Red Cross was extremely helpful in making recommendations and helping them out.

The only thing left to be resolved was where to keep three cats. Keeping them at my cousin's house was not an option because of her allergies and recent sinus surgery. A quick call to Kay Johnson, Director of Environmental Services for the City of Wichita, got the ball rolling on getting this problem solved. She knew that area vets had geared up to handle any influx of animals that might be coming to Wichita. She placed a call to Skaer Veterinary Clinic and within the hour the cats had a new home for the duration of their visit to our great city – the family even has visiting privileges!

In my job, I often hear from the people who have this complaint or that complaint about what is happening in Wichita. On any given day one can read in the Eagle about how bad, boring, expensive, etcetera, etcetera, Wichita is. But I would challenge anyone to find a place in this great country of ours where the people are more friendly, more ready to help at a moments notice, or more just downright nice than right here in Do Dah land.

That's my story and I'm sticking to it.

Sharon

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Special points of interest:

- *Emergency repairs for bridge*
- *Zone change request denied*
- *Neighborhood issues*
- *Trip to Kansas City, Ks*
- *Parking changes*

Bike Riding in the City of Wichita

With the high price of gasoline, many people are turning to alternate forms of transportation including bicycles.

Section 11.48.160 of the city code allows bicycles to be ridden on the sidewalks, in all areas, except the central business district. The city's ordinance is very similar to those of Topeka, Overland Park, and other major cities that prohibit bicycles on sidewalks in business or core areas, but allow the operation in other areas.



If biking isn't your cup of tea, you may also want to investigate the bus route closest to you. These routes and time schedules are easy to find through the city's web site at www.wichita.gov. The buses are now newer, brighter, more comfortable and handicapped accessible so give them a try.

North Meridian Closed for Bridge Repair

On September 7, a large truck hit the underside support beams of the K-96 bridge over Meridian Avenue in North Wichita (right).

Emergency repairs - lasting approximately 8 weeks - will begin on September 26. Westbound K-96 will be restricted to one lane and southbound Meridian traffic will be detoured around the construction area. KDOT has told the city that there is no way to keep one lane of traffic open for each direction and also keep access to the ramps without creating an unsafe situation.

Wichita Fire Department Releases 2005 Fireworks Report



Firework-related injuries, complaints and property damage were down during the 2005 Fourth of July sales season, according to a Wichita Fire Department report.

Between June 27 through July 5, emergency communications received 757 firework complaint calls in the city, down from 951 in 2004.

During the same period, there were 37 firework-related injuries, down from 39 in 2004; and there were no firework-related property loss, down from \$1000 in 2004 (Firework-related property loss totaled \$200,000 in 2002)

In 2005, fire crews were not dispatched to any medical emergencies related to fireworks; calls the department responded to were grass fires.

The Department inspected 40 firework sales tents, issued 13 citations and provided fire watch at seven public and private displays.

As a result of inspecting local firework sales tents, the Fire Department confiscated illegal fireworks valued at \$2,000.00. A sting operation resulted in the seizure of illegal fireworks valued at \$10,000.

The top three fireworks involved in injuries were firecrackers, sparklers and Roman candles. Firecrackers and roman candles were not approved for sale in the City of Wichita. The reduction in firework-related injuries, complaints and property damage are partly related to the City of Wichita's public awareness campaign, launched a few years ago.

On July 13, 2004, the Wichita City Council approved a zone change from Limited commercial to Office Warehouse with a protective Overlay for the property located on the west side of Amidon near 33rd Street.

The property has been home to a smoke shop for several years and has had a lot of storage on it. With the rezoning, the owners of the property agreed to do a lot split within one

Amidon Smoke Shop

year and obey all of the provisions of the protective overlay. This was going to allow them to clean up the property, keep the storage in an acceptable area and make the neighborhood more attractive.

However, since the lot split deadline lapsed and no application for a lot split on the property was submitted,

the zone change request has now been denied and closed for failure to meet the conditions of approval.



Changes at City Hall

The City Hall Campus Improvements include several projects that are designed to improve customer service, enhance security and upgrade the infrastructure around the outside of the building. City Council has authorized a total of \$5.331 million in funding to include all of the projects. The following will describe each separate project, its share of the total budget and its estimated construction schedule:

Atrium Expansion – This project has been bid with Commerce Construction Services, Inc. being the low bidder at \$822,000. The expansion will add approximately 17' to the north and south sides of the existing atrium to allow for the installation of security equipment and queuing of people. The security equipment was purchased through a Homeland Defense Grant. Since the Atrium will have to be closed during construction, foot traffic will be directed to enter through the northwest door. The construction is scheduled to be substantially complete by the end of February 2006.

First Floor Remodel – Council authorized up to \$1.950 million for this project at their meeting August 2, 2005, and approved entering into a contract with Schaeffer Johnson Cox Frey (SJCF) architects to complete their design and prepare construction documents for a January 2006 bid letting. It is anticipated that construction on this project will start immediately after completing the Atrium remodel. This project will involve removing the existing north doors to City Hall and closing the openings, relocating the City Express to the north side of the building, and then rearranging the Council Offices and Board Room for increased security and to more effectively provide access for citizen interface. Added security will also be provided to Council Members and their guests, as the entrance to the Council offices will be visible from the main security desk. Other security features are also planned for inside the council offices as well as in the area of the Board Room. We anticipate that the relocation of City Express will allow us to expand their space allowing more functions to occur there with fewer citizens having to go on to other floors in the building. The project will take approximately 8-10 months to complete and will be done in phases.

Site Improvements – The final phase of the City Hall improvements, which is budgeted for the remaining \$2.209 million of the authorized total, will include:

- * Remove all existing vehicle entrance drives from both Central and Third Streets, including the entrance to the parking garage, and construct two new drives on the west side, one that comes from Central and one that comes from Third Street. These drives will both have security booths and will serve all the surface parking lots and the parking garage.
- * Designate the parking garage as Employees Only. This is for security purposes due to the close proximity of the parking garage to City Hall and the potential danger from vehicle-based explosives.
- * Relocate the cooling towers to a new location south of the building
- * Develop a more prominent route directing citizens and visitors to the new City Hall main entrance (south side of Atrium) through the area currently occupied by the cooling towers
- * Install security bollards or other physical obstructions to keep vehicles a safe perimeter distance from City Hall
- * Install security protection at both ends of the vehicle tunnel under the Council Chambers to include retractable bollards, roll down pedestrian gates and card readers to provide access. Also limit all vehicular access to only be from the west.
- * Redo the walks, ramps and landscaping to provide a more pleasant exterior experience that softens the appearance of the security modifications and is also fully ADA compliant.

The site improvements will be bid after the first floor remodeling is completed so everything will not be disrupted at the same time. Bids are expected to be taken in late 2006 with construction completed in mid 2007.

Goals set for Council District VI

At the 6th District breakfast on August 27, over 30 neighborhood leaders and residents met to help establish goals for the district. These goals were categorized as neighborhood, district, and city at large. If you or your neighborhood group feels that something should be added to the goals, please let Terri at 303-8042 or Sharon at 268-4331 know.

NEIGHBORHOOD ISSUES

1. Bike Path Connection between Minisa and Riverside (TEA 2006)
2. Sidewalk connection from Art Museum to Riverside (TEA 2006)
3. Wellington Place Markers (TEA 2006)
4. Riverview School
5. Housing Projects (Wichita Street)
6. Police Presence (**OP**)
7. Covered shelters and park benches (**OP**)
8. Our basketball court is in desperate need of resurfacing (**OP**)
9. We currently have 2 tennis courts, both in sad shape and need resurfacing bad (**OP**)
10. 5 dirt roads in OPNA area (**OP**)
11. Parking vehicles in front yards (**OP**)
12. Needing volunteers for clean-ups (**OP**)
13. Activities for middle/high school youth (**OP**)
14. Sand Streets (**OP**)
15. Septic Systems (**OP**)
16. Electricity at Pagoda Bldg. R.P. (**RCA**)
17. Lighting/Sims park- pavilion/parking (**RCA**)
18. Stackman/Faulkner Intersection (**RCA**)
19. 3rd St/ McComas and Knight-junk
20. Nelson between Ponderosa & 11th (**LPP**) Weeds high and questionable drainage clean up first and neighbors would maintain.
21. 2nd and West- turn signal going west. Why can't we have turn signal going east?
22. Flooding (**OT**)

OP (ORCHARD PARK) **RCA** (RIVERSIDE CITIZENS ASSOC.) **LPP** (LA PLACITA PARK)

DISTRICT VI ISSUES

- * Neighborhood Plan initiative CORE
- * 2nd/West streets—turn signal both directions
- * More enforcement-parking on grass
- * Clean Team/more communication and education to citizens
- * More staff
- * Drainage maintenance
- * Remove all septic systems and get the residents on city sewer
- * River access
- * Park benches

CITY-AT-LARGE

1. Homeless Shelter
2. Reintegration of Offenders
3. Stop Blight Program
4. Plan to help Environmental Court/residents get houses repaired
5. Arts funding
6. Smoking Ban vs. Private Business
7. Smoke Free Wichita
8. Eyes/Ears programs and post reporting to city website
9. Drainage maintenance
10. More enforcement-parking on grass
11. Clean Team/more communication and education to citizens
12. More staff
13. Continue working on bike paths
14. Benches/Trash cans
15. Tape City Council Workshops
16. Downtown Streetlight timing On Douglas
17. Bird roosts under RR overpasses-droppings

Goals continued:

18. Pictures of OCI cases attached to case
19. Put OCI and Environmental Services (**ES**) under one boss
20. Sessions for ES for educating citizens in neighborhood clean-up
21. Clean Team- Is there coordination anymore
22. More communication between city departments
23. Add benches and trash receptacles along bike path and parks
24. Re-time stop lights along Douglas in downtown
25. More courtesy from inspectors
26. Budget cuts in October for departments.
27. Surplus property-Status

21st Street Update

Exciting things are happening along 21st Street with redevelopment efforts. A group of dedicated people has been meeting for the last several months with the Self-Help Network and City Staff to work toward the formation of a Community Development Corporation (CDC). Last week the group took a one-day bus trip to Kansas City to see what CDCs on both the Kansas and the Missouri sides of Kansas City have accomplished.

It was truly an eye-opening trip. The CDCs in that area have done everything from installing playground equipment at a school that had none, to cleaning out a small 1930's era WPA lake so that area residents can again enjoy it, to building entire shopping areas and luring a major corporation to put its headquarters' building in a redevelopment area. The first stop was at the former Kansas City, Kansas City Hall. The historic building was purchased by the CDC for \$1.00 (the group says that they way over paid) and converted into mixed income apartments. Other CDC's showed examples of both rehabilitated and new housing along with their commercial projects.

Overall, the group took away a lot of knowledge and ideas from the visit. Many of them also breathed a sigh of relief when they saw some of the deplorable conditions that these groups have dealt with compared to where we are starting along the 21st Street corridor.

The next step for 21st Street is to establish a Steering Committee consisting of area stakeholders to work with city staff and the Self-Help Network to formulate bylaws, establish parameters for board selection and work through the IRS procedures to become a 501C3 organization. This group will meet each week for approximately six weeks starting in late October.

El Pueblo Neighborhood Association Neighborhood Plan

El Pueblo Neighborhood Association has joined with Kansas Pride to start work on a neighborhood plan. The association is located between 21st Street, 29th Street, Market and the Little Arkansas River. Earlier this year, the El Pueblo Neighborhood Association approached representatives of the Kansas PRIDE Program with a request for assistance in developing a neighborhood vision to address a variety of housing, social, health, education and recreational issues in this newly formed neighborhood association. The Kansas PRIDE Program is a no-cost service provided through the Kansas Department of Commerce and Kansas State University to help citizen groups organize and work together for community improvement. The types of services provided include community resource assessment tools, assistance in facilitating meetings and assisting with community organization. The success of the program depends on the initiative, leadership and commitment of the local participating neighborhood or community group.

The Kansas PRIDE Program is typically targeted to the smaller communities and rural areas of Kansas. PRIDE has not yet worked with a community group in Wichita. It is anticipated that PRIDE will start working with El Pueblo Neighborhood Association later this month and conclude in early 2006.

In conjunction with the PRIDE Program initiative, the El Pueblo Neighborhood Association has engaged the support of Inter-Faith Ministries who will dedicate an AmeriCorps worker to help identify community resources within the neighborhood. The Metropolitan Area Planning Department has also agreed to commit staff support to help the El Pueblo Neighborhood Association develop a neighborhood plan, starting in March 2006, based upon the outputs of this PRIDE Program initiative.

Parking Changes in Old Town

The Merchants of Old Town Association (MOTA) worked with the city to mitigate parking issues in Old Town. Due to the popularity of Old Town, especially on the weekends, many visitors have chosen to utilize limousines and charter buses for their transportation. Use of these vehicles lowers the demand for parking spaces and lessens traffic congestion. Problems arose, however, when the limos and buses returned to pick up their passengers and could not find an appropriate place to wait.

According to MOTA and the Community Police officers, two existing taxi stands in Old Town were seldom used. It was recommended that these be replaced with restricted short-term loading and unloading zones for limos and charter buses. These two locations are on the south side of First Street east of Mosley and on the north side of Second Street east of Mosley. In addition, a third drop-off and pick up for limos and charter buses was established on the north side of Douglas immediately west of Mead. The hours during which the loading and unloading will be in effect will be 9 p.m. to 3 a.m. daily. Violations are punishable by a fine of not less than \$100 per occurrence.

Evergreen Neighborhood City Hall
2700 N. Woodland Ste. D
Wichita, Ks 67204
Phone: 316-303-8042
Fax: 316-303-8049
Email: www.wichita.gov

Access Plan for the Arkansas River

At its August 9, 2005 meeting, the City Council approved the funding for an Arkansas River Corridor Canoe Access Plan. This is part of the communities efforts to make Wichita and surrounding areas a more attractive place to live and enjoy.



In the early 1990's, the Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks (KDWP) began efforts to provide access points to the Big Arkansas River just northwest of Hutchinson. Wichita has recently completed a canoe access launch point in Garvey Park in south Wichita and plans to build another access launch at the South Arkansas Greenway later this year. On May 2, 2005, KDWP sent Wichita a "letter of commitment" earmarking \$30,000 to do a joint study with the city regarding more access points.

The Wichita Park Department, the funding source for the city's match of \$30,000, and KDWP have tentatively agreed to focus on a canoe trail from Hutchinson to Oxford. This area includes Wichita and Sedgwick County. By developing a comprehensive plan, the city, with the help of county and state officials, can provide a blueprint for future development.

Bike Path Dedicated

The new North Riverside Neighborhood Association bike path was dedicated on September 17. The morning started with a bike parade from La Familia Senior Center to Minisa Park. The parade included decorated bikes, vintage bikes, a bicycle built for two and Santa Clause leading the way in a golf cart. After the dedication, the group was served hot dogs, chips and sodas.

The bike path was funded through a partnership with the City of Wichita and a federal Transportation Enhancement grant. The neighborhood association had to apply for the grant two years in a row in order to get the funding. It has taken almost six years for the project to become reality. It was, however, being enjoyed by many people walking and riding along it before it had even been officially opened.

The group is so excited that they are ready to apply for another grant to extend the path south of the Minisa bridge in order to link it to the Riverside Park system and bike paths. If history is any indication, they should be able to get this next project done, too.

Rezoning Started for Adding Properties to the Central Business District

An effort has been launched by the City of Wichita to change zoning near downtown and Old Town to Central Business District (CBD). This will allow for mixed use of residential, retail and some commercial. Much of the current zoning does not allow residential which makes it impossible to convert some of the old buildings to a better use while helping bring people and vitality to the downtown area.

"CBD" also removes the off-site parking requirements to allow flexibility in developing shared parking facilities to serve multiple parking needs, eliminates building setbacks to allow zero-lot setbacks in character with traditional downtown development and compatible with the trends in loft/apartment uses, eliminates height restrictions to allow higher intensity use that reinforces the viability and liveliness of the downtown area.

Two areas are to be rezoned. The first is (approximately) along Commerce Street between William and Kellogg. The second area is (approximately) between Second Street, Hydraulic, Waterman, and the BNSF Railroad right-of-way.

